

cations area prevented, through its supporters in the Senate, prevented the bill from passing in the last session of Congress. I hope we can get it, but we want to get it right.

The Vice President has done a lot of work on this over the years. He and I have talked about this at great length. And we have negotiated in good faith with the Congress to try to get it right. We want very much to sign

a bill. We believe it will be good for the American economy and good for the American consumers if it's the right kind of bill. So we'll keep working on it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:17 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

Teleconference Remarks to the Fraternal Order of Police *August 1, 1995*

Thank you very much, Dewey. I'm going to miss those introductions. I want to thank you for your 8 years of strong leadership as the national president of the Fraternal Order of Police. It gives me great pleasure to present you a Presidential commendation for your distinguished service to the Nation, which I believe the Attorney General will personally deliver to you tomorrow.

I also want to thank the other departing board members for all the hard work that you have done to help us strengthen law enforcement around the country. I understand that the elections to succeed all of you folks are on Thursday, so let me say as a fellow candidate, I want to wish the other candidates the best of luck and offer every one of them my heartfelt sympathy. I know how tough the last couple of days before an election can be; I've been there.

Your new president will lead the FOP into a better, safer world for law enforcement; a better, safer world because of the hard work of people like Dewey Stokes; a better, safer world because of the partnership our administration has been privileged to forge with you and with men and women in law enforcement all across our great country.

In the years before I came to Washington, it was clear that those of you who put your lives on the line to protect the rest of us were simply not getting the tools you needed to get the job done. The facts spoke for themselves. Crime was going up, but the number of police was staying the same or falling in so many cities and rural areas. It was a dangerous ratio.

I also had a lot of personal experience as a guide. As attorney general and then as a Gov-

ernor, I went to too many funerals for police officers who were friends of mine killed in the line of duty. When I became President, I knew we all had to do more. So I came to Washington with a clear agenda: more police, guns out of the hands of criminals, an emphasis on community policing and other strategies to build stronger neighborhoods and to stop crimes before they happen. Working together, we have turned that agenda into law.

You and I and others who are on our side broke 6 years of gridlock and passed a crime bill that was written with the help of police officers all across America. We knew we needed more police officers, so we're putting 100,000 more police on the street. Already we've boosted your ranks by awarding more than 20,000 new police officers to over half the departments in the United States. We knew we had to get deadly assault weapons out of our lives, so we banned 19 types of assault weapons, weapons that target police officers and children. At the same time, we protected about 650 hunting and sporting weapons specifically.

We knew too many criminals were getting too many chances to do harm, so now we have "three strikes and you're out," and it's being enforced around the country. We knew there had to be zero tolerance for killing a law enforcement officer, so now in Federal law, we have the death penalty for anyone who murders a police officer. We also passed the Brady bill, which languished in Congress for 7 years. Last year alone, this commonsense law prevented more than 40,000 felons and fugitives from purchasing handguns.

And in June, I announced my support of legislation to ban armor-piercing bullets. Our current laws control ammunition based on what it's made of, and that's not good enough. Too many lethal bullets still slip through the cracks. This legislation will change that. It will see to it that we judge ammunition not on the basis of what's in it but on the harm it can do. If it can rip through a bulletproof vest like a knife through butter, then it should be history, no matter what it's made of.

These measures are helping you bring safety and security back to the lives of millions of Americans and helping you to be somewhat safer while you're doing that very difficult job.

And you have made a phenomenal amount of progress. Crime is down in major cities all around the country. Last Sunday, the New York Times reported that the dramatic drop in crime in New York City is a direct result of sensible gun laws, increased police presence, and a focus on hot spots, on the areas with high crime rates. A study the Justice Department sponsored in Kansas City yielded similar results: target an area, get rid of the guns, intimidate the criminals, the crime goes down. We are making progress.

But you and I both know we've got a lot more to do, because even as the overall crime rates drop, the rate of random violence among young people is still going up—dramatically in many places. As a parent, I am sick and tired of seeing stories like the one I read recently about a 16-year-old boy who shot a 12-year-old boy dead because he thought he'd been treated with disrespect by the younger boy. This story came just days after a national survey in which an unbelievable two-thirds of young gang members said they thought it was actually acceptable to shoot someone if they treated you with disrespect.

As long as there are stories like this, as long as young people are more likely to be both the victims and the perpetrators of crime, as long as casual drug use among our children is rising even as overall hard drug use goes down, as long as there are children who have never been taught the difference between right and wrong, we'll all have more work to do.

And that's why I'm troubled by so much of what's going on here in Washington. We have to balance the budget, all right, but there are some in Congress who would do it by tipping the balance against law enforcement. They

would replace our efforts to put 100,000 new police officers on the street with a block grant that doesn't require a single new officer to be hired. They want to cut 23 million students out of our safe and drug-free schools initiative—out of the programs that so many of you bring to our schools every day all across America. And literally, they want to shut down the National Office of Drug Control Policy.

We can't give up on the war on drugs. And we can't back off of our support for law enforcement. And the truth is, we don't need to sacrifice these national priorities to balance the budget. We can continue to implement the crime bill and balance the budget. The only thing we'd have to do is to give up on an unnecessarily huge tax cut and to take a little longer to balance the budget. Now that luxury seems a small price to pay for necessities like balancing the budget and strengthening law enforcement at the same time.

And believe it or not, there are still some in Congress who want to repeal the Brady bill and lift the ban on assault weapons. Let me be clear: These attempts to roll back the clock are misguided. We cannot turn back in the fight against crime. There are still too many streets in America where our children are afraid to stand at a bus stop, too many neighborhoods where our seniors are fearful of going to the grocery store, too many communities where families are scared to head outside for a walk on a warm summer evening.

So those in Congress who would attempt to repeal the Brady bill or the assault weapons ban or our pledge to put 100,000 new police officers on the street, let me say one more time: You're going nowhere fast. If you do succumb to the political pressure from extremist groups to repeal any of these measures, I will veto them in a heartbeat.

On these issues I have a simple pledge. I won't let any bill pass my desk that hurts you or the people you protect. That's a good American standard. We all ought to judge our conduct by it.

You know, this has been a difficult period for law enforcement. You seem to be under assault from many fronts. Like people from every walk of life, police officers sometimes do make mistakes and have to deal with the consequences. But unlike other citizens, you also put your lives on the line for the rest of us every day. I'm reminded of a T-shirt that people

in Oklahoma City made after the terrible bombing there. It read, "A society that makes war against its police had better learn to make friends with criminals." That's the fact.

I'm sorry I can't be with you in person today, but I want you to have no doubt I am still standing shoulder to shoulder with you in the battle against crime and violence. It threatens us all every day, every night, and you're trying

to do something about it. As long as you are, I'll be with you for as long as I'm here.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. by satellite from Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building to the FOP conference in Virginia Beach, VA.

Statement on Proposed Telecommunications Reform Legislation *August 1, 1995*

My administration is committed to enactment of a telecommunications reform bill in this Congress. Such legislation is needed to stimulate investment, promote competition, provide open access to information networks, strengthen and improve universal service, and provide for flexible regulations for this important industry. Consumers should receive the benefits of lower prices, better quality, and greater choices in their telephone and cable services, and they should continue to benefit from a diversity of voices and viewpoints in radio, television, and the print media.

Unfortunately, H.R. 1555, as reported by the Commerce Committee and amended by the managers' amendment, does not reach any of these goals. Instead of promoting investment and competition, it promotes mergers and concentration of power. Instead of promoting open access and diversity of content and viewpoints, it would allow fewer people to control greater numbers of television, radio, and newspaper outlets in every community.

H.R. 1555 with the managers' amendment would:

- allow a single owner to acquire television stations that can reach 50 percent of the Nation;

- allow the acquisition of an unlimited number of radio stations in every community and across the Nation;

- repeal the newspaper/broadcast and broadcast/cable cross-ownership bans that currently exist;

- permit the Bell Operating Companies to offer long distance service before there is real competition in local service, with less-than-minimum structural safeguards and without requiring a determination by the Department of Justice that entry will not impede competition;

- allow an excessive number of in-region buyouts between telephone companies and cable operators, substituting consolidation for competition and leaving consumers in rural areas and small towns with no rate protection in most cases and no foreseeable expectation of competition;

- deregulate cable programming services and equipment rates before cable operators face real competition and without providing any consumer protection provision after deregulation;

- preempt the States from implementing certain rate regulation schemes and opening their local phone markets to certain types of competition as they choose; and

- not include the V-chip proposal the Senate adopted.

The cumulative effect of these provisions would be to harm competition and to weaken the benefits to the public. If H.R. 1555 with the managers' amendment is sent to me without deletion or revision of a significant number of these provisions I will be compelled to veto it in the best interests of the public and our national economic well-being.